

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, BEXP, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN PORT CONGESTION--NEW DIRECTIVES

1. THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (MOT) HAS ISSUED A SERIES OF DIRECTIVES ON THE SAILINGS AND ARRIVALS OF VESSELS INTO NIGERIAN PORTS. THES REGULATIONS BECAME EFFECTIVE AUGUST 18, 1975, AND MOT REQUESTS THAT ALL SHIPPING COMPANIES AND SHIPPING AGENTS OPERATING IN NIGERIA "ADVISE THEIR OVERSEAS PRINCIPALS" OF THESE DIRECTIVES. THE DIRECTIVES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(1) ALL SHIPPING AGENTS MUST REGISTER WITH THE NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY (NPA) BEFORE UNDERTAKING ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIA.

(2) ALL SHIPPING COMPANIES AND AGENTS MUST FURNISH THE NPA THE BELOW LISTED INFORMATION (BEGIN UNDERLINE) AT LEAST TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO THE DEPARTURE OF THEIR VESSELS FROM THE LOADING PORTS (END UNDERLINE).

(A) PORT OR PORST OF SAILING AND ESTIMATED TIME OF DEPARTURE.

(B) PORT OR PORTS OF DISCHARGE IN NIGERIA.

(C) ESTIMATED DATES OF ARRIVAL IN NIGERIAN PORT OR PORTS.

(D) DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE TYPE OF CARGO TO BE IMPORTED INTO NIGERIA.

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(E) TOTAL DEAD WEIGHT OR FREIGHT TONNAGE OF THE

CARGO ABOARD INCOMING VESSELS TO BE IMPORTED
INTO NIGERIA.

(F) LENGTH, BREADTH, AND DRAFT OF INCOMING VESSELS.

(3.) ON RECEIPT OF THIS ADVANCE INFORMATION, NPA WILL
CO-ORDINATE ALL SAILINGS AND REGULATE THE ARRIVALS OF VESSELS
IN NIGERIAN PORTS.

(4.) THIS ADVANCE INFORMATION WILL ENABLE NPA TO CONFIRM
AND APPROVE SUCH SAILINGS OR, ALTERNATIVELY, ALTER AND FIX
DATES MORE SUITABLE TO NPA.

(5) AFTER NPA CONFIRMS OR ALTERS THE DEPARTURE DATES
OF INCOMING VESSELS, SHIPPING COMPANIES AND AGENTS WILL CONVEY
THIS INFORMATION TO THEIR OVERSEAS PRINCIPALS WHO WILL THEN
BE EXPECTED TO ARRANGE SAILINGS OF VESSELS FROM DEPARTURE PORTS
SO AS TO ARRIVE AT NIGERIAN PORTS IN CONFORMANCE WITH NPA
BOOKINGS.

2. A RECONSTITUTED PORTS OPERATION COMMITTEE IS TO BE
CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALLOCATING BERTHS TO
SHIPS WITH CLEARANCE FROM NPA. THE COMMITTEE WILL BE
COMPASSED OF OFFICIALS FROM THE NPA AND "SOME SHIPPING
COMPANIES/AGENTS' REPRSENTATIVES" WHO WILL MEET EACH
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY. THERE WILL ALSO BE A WEEKLY PUBLI-
CATION ANNOUNCING ESTIMATED DATES OF ARRIVAL OF VESSELS
IN NIGERIAN PORTS AND INDICATING THEIR ASSIGNED BERTHS. THE
FAILURE OF ANY SHIPPING COMPANY OR AGENT TO COMPLY WITH
THESE DIRECTIVES WILL RESULT IN NPA
REFUSING SERVICE TO THEIR VESSELS. IN ADDITION, "UNTIL
THE PROBLEM OF PORTS CONGESTION IS RESOLVED," THE MINISTRY
OF FINANCE HAS BEEN REQUESTED TO "REGULATE THE PROCESS BY
WHICH IT PROVIDES AUTOMATIC FOREIGN EXCHANGE COVERS" TO
PRIVATE SHIP CHARTERERS. ALL INQUIRIES ABOUT THESE
DIRECTIVES SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE PORT MONAGER OF THE
APPROPRIATE NIGERIAN PORT, MOT STATES.

3. COMMENT: PRIVATE SHIPPING COMPANIES AND AGENTS OPERAT-
ING OUT OF LAGOS (PALM LINES, UMARCO, FARRELL LINES) DO
NOT YET HAVE A FEEL OF PRECISELY HOW THESE DIRECTIVES WILL
AFFECT THEIR OPERATIONS. THEY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED, HOWEVER,
THAT THE NEW MOHAMMED REGIMJWILL NOT RPT NOT
RENEGE ON PREVIOUS PRIORITY BERTHING ARRANGEMENTS AND THAT
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THESE AGREEMENTS WILL CONTINUE AS BEFORE APPARENTLY WITH
LITTLE MODIFICATION BY THE NEW DIRECTIVES. THERE HAS BEEN
SOME DISCUSSION THAT NPA WILL DESIGNATE FOUR BERTHS AS
BERTHS RESERVED FOR CEMENT CARGOES. NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW
WHAT WILL BE THE COMPOSITION OR AUTHORITY OF THE NEW PORTS
OPERATION COMMITTEE, DECISIONS WHICH PROBABLY HAVE NOT YET
BEEN MADE BY NPA.

4. THIS SERIES OF DIRECTIVES REPRESENTS A CONCERTED EFFORT BY THE NEW REGIME TO TAKE DECISIVE STEPS TO COMBAY PORT CONGESTION. ALTHOUGH, WITHOUT A DOUBT, SNAGS WILL DEVELOP IN IMPLEMENTATION, THE SYSTEM SHOULD GIVE THE FMG A NEW ABILITY CONTROL THE FLOW OF SHIPS TO NIGERIA AND THEREBY ACCORD PRIORITY TO DESIGNATED CARGOES. ANY SHORT RUN EFFORT TO DECONGEST PORTS WILL HAVE THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF REDUCING THE VOLUME OF CARGO ARRIVING, AND THE ORDINARY NON-PRIORITY IMPORTER WILL LIKELY FACE ADDITIONAL DELAYS IN RECEIVING MATERIAL FROM OVERSEAS. A SIGNIFICANT DROP IN THE AMOUNT OF ARRIVING CARGO WHICH PERSISTS OVER TIME WILL ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECT FULFILLMENT OF THIRD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

GOALS. BUT WITH 320 SHIPS NOW WAITING OFF LAGOS INCURRING HUGE DEMURRAGE CHARGES, THERE IS A COMPELLING NEED FOR BOLD ACTION OF SOME KIND, AND THIS PLAN, TOGETHER WITH OTHER INTERIM MEASURES BEING TAKEN TO IMPORVE EFFICIENCY COULD REDUCE DRAMATICALLY THE NUMBER OF WAITING SHIPS. THE LONGER-RANGE PROBLEM OF INSUFFICIENT CAPACITY OF THE PORTS WILL REMAIN, HOWEVER, UNTIL THE PORTS ARE EXPANDED AND FACILITIES MODERNIZED.

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